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W. H. H.

A  
S P E E C H  
ON SOME  
POLITICAL TOPICS,

THE SUBSTANCE OF WHICH  
Was intended to have been Delivered  
IN THE  
HOUSE OF COMMONS,

On MONDAY the 14th of DECEMBER, 1778,

When the ESTIMATES of the ARMY were agreed  
to in the Committee of Supply.

*H. Godrich Esq*

---

Aux murs de Westminster on voit paraître ensemble  
Trois Pouvoirs etonnés du noeud qui les rassemble ;  
Les Deputés du Peuple, les Grands, & le Roi  
Divisés d'interets, reunis par la Loi ;  
Tous trois membres sacrés de ce Corps invincible  
Dangereux a lui meme, a ses voisins terrible.  
Heureux lorsque le Peuple, instruit dans son devoir,  
Respecte autant qu'il doit le Souverain Pouvoir.  
Plus heureux lorsqu'un Roi, doux, juste & politique  
Respecte autant qu'il doit la liberté publique.

VOLTAIRE.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for T. CADELL, in the Strand.

MDCCCLXXIX.

1779, G66

## ADVERTISEMENT.

*THE substance of the following Speech was partly conceived before, and partly during the Debate, to which it refers. Some circumstances, of no import to the Reader, prevented its being delivered at the time. Immediately upon coming home from the House, the Author committed the principal heads and outlines of it to writing; and has occasionally employed his leisure time since in extending and drawing them out in that free stile of discourse, in which he would have addressed the Speaker of the House of Commons. In that form it is now submitted to the public judgment, with the addition of some Notes and Illustrations. Circumstances being still the same as then, he presumes the topics discussed are still equally in season. He begs that his sentiments and observations may always be interpreted consistently with the most liberal principles of Civil and Religious Liberty, to which he is a most hearty friend; being persuaded, that the very prime*  
end

*end of all Civil Government is to protect and secure the enjoyment of LIBERTY,—and that therefore the great object, to which all its operations should be directed, is to guard, as much as possible, the equal, impartial, ease and freedom of all the subjects of it. As these principles are the result of the most deliberate and repeated investigation, and regulate all his judgments on subjects that come under their influence, he is certain of not having advanced any thing which does not perfectly harmonize with them.*

*As the form of this publication did not admit of a methodical division of Chapters or Sections, there is prefixed a general list of the Contents referred to their respective pages.*

*Febr. 1, 1779.*



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A  
S P E E C H  
O N  
SOME POLITICAL TOPICS, &c.

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MR. S P E A K E R,

S I R,

I CAME down to this House to day in expectation of a perfect unanimity on the motion now before us,—and very happy I feel in being a witness to it. I knew, Sir, that as we were all but *one heart* in earnestly wishing for the national welfare, so we could not but be all of *one mind*, in assenting to the vigorous exertions required for its maintenance and security on the present occasion.

The question to day is not to support this or that minister—but the British empire, its possessions,  
B fions,

sions, its dignity, its welfare, and its prosperity ; we therefore are, and could not be otherwise than, all unanimous. And I sincerely congratulate both the House and the Nation on this very desirable, though, in these times, too unusual circumstance ; as it exhibits a pleasing display of the triumph of virtue and public spirit, over every kind of opposition whatsoever, as well as a happy refutation of the assertion and prediction, which an intemperate ebullition of party-zeal threw out on the first day of the session—to wit, that no unanimity could be obtained while the present Administration continued. — But I knew then, Sir, that the hearty affection for their country, which warms the breast of every member of this House, would, when put to a strong test, entirely annihilate all those comparatively little interests of party, which, in matters less plain, too much prevail over those of the public : I knew that those who had uttered, or had concurred in, the above unadvised assertions and predictions concerning want of unanimity, possessed too much worth, not rather themselves to disprove their own prediction, than accomplish it by dissenting from the necessary requisition of Government this day.

Since then, Sir, the motion before us is not disagreed to by any person, there needs no argument

•

ment to enforce the propriety and necessity of it in the present urgent circumstances of our dear country, and its most important interests: but several matters having been brought into debate, and cast upon the consideration of the House, with various views and tendency, I humbly beg indulgence to resume the most important of them, and to throw in my mite towards the support of Truth, Justice, and the Public Welfare.

It was urged early in the day,—that however great and mighty the military and naval force of this Nation has been represented to us by the Honourable Gentleman who made the motion, we can expect nothing from it while under the direction of the present Administration; that it would be madness to entrust them with the conduct of it; and that therefore we ought to insist on their removal. This was enforced,

I. By the consideration of the ill success which has hitherto attended the war they have directed, the egregious blunders they have committed, the little confidence the nation and the troops have in their councils, their ill conduct, utter inability, and such like general topics.

II. By the presumption that they would employ a part of this force in the continuation of the destructive war in North America,—a measure fraught with ruin and destruction to this country.

These suggestions gave life and matter to the present debate; and under these two heads, I shall be able to comprize, with tolerable method, all that my duty urges me to say on this occasion, and in this place,

## I.

Sir, in regard to the first topic, viz. The alleged mal-conduct, experienced inability, and ill success, of those who have the administration of affairs, with the inferred necessity of transferring it to other men;—I will be decently free to speak out my sentiments on this head, as an honest independent member of parliament,—with impartiality and candor,—without influence or fear of either side of the House. With this independence, and impartial temper, I came into Parliament; I will uniformly maintain it. In every circumstance of connection or friendship, no consideration but the interests of my country, its constitution, and its precious liberties, shall bias my conduct here. This I hold to be the  
 3 prime



prime duty of every member of the House of Commons, whether in or out of office; this is the line of conduct I have laid down,—the enlarged circle I shall tread in. My principles may possibly not coincide with those of *this side* or of *that side*,—but they shall be *my own*; the result of my own judgment and my own conviction: that is all I will *answer* for; my friends know this disposition, and they as well as my country may so far fully *depend* upon me.

Whoever are the Ministers,—Government shall have my voice, whenever their propositions are evidently right and proper; it is not to *them* that I give it; it is to my *country* that I then both owe and give it. When their demands are improper or pernicious, they never shall have my feeble support—were they ever so right in other respects. I confess to have no notion of indiscriminate opposition or support,—much less of distressing one's country for the sake of distressing individuals in power. I am sure *that* is not the line of *enlightened integrity*; I can not reconcile it with good morals or good politics. Besides I am firmly persuaded,—that as Administration may by their conduct very much hurt and distress their country, so may Opposition;—that as Administration may very much abuse its influence, so may Opposition;—that as Administration may corrupt, so Op-  
position

position may be corrupted;—that as Administration may harbour designs inimical to our liberties, so Opposition may have sinister purposes, and their conduct may *tend*, if not *intend*, to overturn both Constitution and Liberty. Sir, I am far, very far, from meaning here to insinuate any thing against either side; I rather believe that their views are pure and well-intentioned: but I say that Experience and History warrant the above general assertions, and I therefore affirm it to be the duty of the independent members of this House to watch both Opposition and Administration, and in proportion as their conduct has any sinister tendency, to *expose* and *oppose* it. By their fruits, by their deeds, by their works, let them be fairly judged; not from their family names, or the denomination that others stamp upon them. *Whiggism* and *Toryism* are a set of principles,—not an heir loom that descends with a name or an estate, and it is an insult to a man's understanding and heart to seek for his political principles in his family pedigree. But I hope to God that *real Tories* and *Republican Whigs*, those two extremes that always generate each other, may never hold up their heads again in this country.—I will venture to say, that nothing can so effectually raise them again from deserved obscurity and contempt as the violence of party.

Now,

Now, Sir, having premised thus much concerning my general principles, I proceed to the subject of Administration as stated above.—Sir, I wish to God we had a *better*!—it should have my hearty concurrence and support. I entirely agree, that more vigour, more exertion, more wisdom, greater abilities, more success, more unanimity, are devoutly to be wished for: great wisdom and abilities are always desirable in the most eminent degree in our Administration; never more than in the present circumstances. I therefore should heartily rejoice to see a more able, a more likely one, ready to take the reins of government, supported by the hearty concurrence of the Nation. I should most sincerely congratulate my country upon it. But would it be right for us to vote away our present ministers without any obvious likelihood of being better served, and without enquiry, how far they are, or are not, to blame for failure of success? Surely that would be a thoughtless way of proceeding,—a signal degree of political presumption. Wherefore till there are more promising candidates for the succession, or till the present occupiers are, either in my judgment, or according to the legal forms of the constitution, convicted as unworthy to be entrusted with the affairs of their department, I must support them in what is necessary and proper towards the due operation  
of

of their executive powers : I will do the same, under the same limitations, by any Administration his Majesty constitutionally appoints, and I humbly apprehend it to be the duty of Parliament so to do.

Sir, I think there is a very important distinction which suggests itself on this topic to a considerate mind. When Ministers are guilty of treason against the liberties of the commonwealth, and against its sacred constitution,—I would be the foremost to hurl down the vengeance of the offended majesty of the people on their heads. Whatever their services or abilities, their removal from power should be instant. The line of duty is in this case perfectly easy. That insinuations and accusations of this kind have been thrown out, though not to day, against the present Ministers, I well know ; but I know as certainly, that the grounds alledged, however worked up by considerable abilities, were exceedingly weak and frivolous. I have for several years past been an attentive observer of affairs, particularly in regard to this important concern ; and have closely examined all the evidence produced to support those accusations against Ministry ; but they cannot stand a fair and sober discussion. I have also with no small regret seen some of the most respectable  
names

names in this kingdom let themselves down so far as to be heated, and to heat others, into much ingenious, though egregious sophistry, into much misrepresentation and abuse, in order to prove that favorite point ; but I aver with perfect conviction, that there never were majorities in Parliament, that had more the advantage, in point of argument and clear reasoning, over their opponents, than those which have voted on the several constitutional questions occasionally debated since 1768.\*

Indeed this kind of attack upon Government seems to have been of late given up, since the

\* I beg leave to quote, in regard to the last constitutional question agitated in 1777, the words of a very able writer who styles himself a Member of Parliament. Very unfavourable as he is to Ministry, he frankly and impartially acknowledges, that “ no superiority in point of argument “ could be greater than what the Ministry enjoyed on “ the question of the voluntary subscriptions for raising “ men :”—and he subjoins this note in the margin ; “ In “ a very learned and able debate in the House of Com- “ mons, ushered in by Mr. Dunning, it was attempted “ to be proved, that the voluntary subscriptions for raising “ men were of the nature of *Benevolences*. But the superiority of the sound and plain argument on the part of “ the Crown Lawyers, in opposition to strained ingenuity, “ clearly shewed the futility of this supposition.” *Examination into the conduct of Administration from 1774 to 1778*, printed for Almon, p. 11.

American war has afforded another topic to opposition; and as it was a proofless charge, so it must in justice be added, that there is not the least appearance of oppression of liberty or of arbitrary rule upon the face of things, more than occurs under every administration. But, Sir, if there be any thing that seems to tend that way,—or that might excite a suspicion of a wish to curtail our liberties,—it is the extreme licentiousness of seditious abuse, which the present powers of Government suffer beyond law and the example of all former times: for it may be depended upon that when the licentiousness of sedition arrives at a certain pitch of disorder, it must and will be restrained by some power or other; and when the ordinary boundaries of the law are so far overleaped on the one side, power will, in its turn, be very apt, nay perhaps necessitated, to overleap them too in the same or greater proportion, and to have recourse to extraordinary remedies for extraordinary disorders. One lawless power naturally begets another, and constant Experience concurs with Reason to evince, that no two things are more nearly connected than—extreme licentiousness and arbitrary power; which I intreat those well to consider, who so much abuse the wholesome liberties of this country.

Our

Our Laws in regard to the freedom of speaking, writing, &c. with respect to Government and its concerns are, in general, good, suited to our Constitution, and sufficient for the purposes of good order and useful liberty. But it is requisite they should be, on proper occasions, duly put in execution ;—for as they bind so gently, a little relaxation on the part of government introduces much more disorder than is consistent with the ends of civil society. And as I am solicitous to preclude more narrow restrictions, I am therefore sanguine against any abuse that may serve as a fair pretext, or tend, to introduce them.

I will select an instance or two of this tame sufferance of Government, which I have here mentioned, out of the many that must occur to every one's recollection.

One is a public Newspaper, Sir :—I mean that daily print, called the *General Advertiser or Morning Intelligencer*. There is not a week passes but that publication flies in the face of Government, and all civil order, with the most indecent seditious reflections on the highest established powers in this country, with assertions, insinuations, and an extreme political licentiousness, absolutely contrary to the letter and spirit of the wholesome

moderate laws, which regulate the effusions of our printing presses. I desire it may be remarked, that I am not now determining on the natural merit or demerit of this illegal conduct; I leave that here out of the question: there are, doubtless, circumstances in which a much more violent opposition to Government may be very justifiable. All I beg to be observed are these facts;—that such a degree of seditious licentiousness as is contrary to our laws, does at present not seldom stalk barefaced through the land;—that our Constitution has vested the powers that be with legal authority to repress and punish it;—that nevertheless it is tamely suffered to set the laws at defiance;—that this is inconsistent with orderly government, good policy, with the respect due to ourselves as a Nation, and has a very obvious tendency both to throw us into confusion, and to bring us under the rule of arbitrary power: for though possibly anarchy may prevail for a time, the consequences are most likely to be fatal to general liberty. People should therefore well weigh the consequences, before they venture too far beyond the bounds of legal opposition\*.

My

\* *Ex ungue leonem!* With what indignation must not the good people of this country have read the following detestable paragraph, spiring them up to wish for, encourage, aid  
and



My other instance of tameness in suffering licentious abuse, I take from the late House of Commons,—as it has always peculiarly struck my mind. Sir, there is a certain decency of censure, of expression, and of language, due to the honor and dignity of this House from every member of it. There are, doubtless, certain degrees of animadversion on the rights, privileges, and deliberate acts of this Representative body, which none

and assist a French invasion as a means of promoting their prosperity! “ If the French should invade and actually  
 “ conquer this Island, the taxes, which at present ruin all  
 “ ranks of people, would be taken off, commerce would be  
 “ protected, and at any rate we should not be governed by  
 “ such wretches as the Thane, Charles Jenkinson, needy  
 “ Scotchmen, and rapacious contractors.” *General Advertiser*, Friday Dec. 25, p. 2.—Good God! if the public prints are suffered to circulate such private seditious sentiments of unworthy individuals, under the mask, pretext, and banners of Opposition, we are indeed a sinking nation. I have heard it often alledged, that there are other public papers equally abusive of private and public characters: bad enough indeed; but I am not speaking here of assassination of character; I speak of seditious language, of exciting the people to resistance, of treasonable suggestions against the King, and such-like delinquencies; in which the Paper I speak of has not its equal, nor was the like ever permitted before. I mean not to depreciate its merits in other respects as a Newspaper: I am only here instancing the supine sufferance of government, and the evil consequences that flow from it.

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of its members can usurp, without violating the respect and duty they owe to its high constitutional pre-eminence; and even where the animadversion is within proper bounds, the expressions and language made use of may go beyond the line of orderly decency. In both these cases this Honourable House has a constitutional right to censure, punish, or expel, according to the nature of the case, the undutiful associate. Now, Sir,—when was ever the honour, the dignity, the honesty, the justice of a House of Commons more wantonly and egregiously insulted, than by that Member of the last Parliament, who calmly and deliberately, after having been called to order for the same insult just before, got up merely for the purpose of uttering this impeachment?—“ Standing up in my place as member for the “ County of York, *I do declare, that this House of “ Commons has BETRAYED the rights of the People.\**” Yet he did it uncensured and unpunished. I am not here casting any reflection on the very worthy person who performed this feat; he may probably plead his conscience for so acting, and I dispute it not: but I say,—that however great be that Gentleman’s worth, however pure his inten-

\* See *Debates of the British House of Commons from 1768 to 1770*, p. 178.

tions,

tions, however good his heart, however truly respectable his character,—which I am sincerely inclined to acknowledge in a high degree;—nay, even supposing his assertions were founded in truth, which I as positively deny;—nevertheless I say, that no House of Commons ought to suffer such reproachful language, without signal animadversion, as long as it has *existence, authority, and liberty*. The Constitution does not allow of it.

There is a sort of opposition, which goes to the dissolution of the established powers; and therefore cannot be endured while those powers remain in due function. And besides this,—what disorderly and brutal violence would it not occasion in this House, if such language as the above was replied and retorted to in the same strain, which every one had as much right to use as the abovementioned honourable Gentleman.—But I am sorry to be obliged to say, that in these matters, Administration, as well as Parliament, have, more than once, according to the Scripture phrase,—strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel.

But, Sir, if the line of duty is plain, when ministers abuse their power to the oppression of the liberties and rights of the people; it is very different, when they are only convicted of error, or  
weakness,

weakness, or ill conduct, or defect of wisdom or knowledge, or of bad success, in the management of the national concerns. For, since these must more or less be borne with under all human administrations; since there is a portion of much culpable infirmity in the best of men; since practical politics admit of a very considerable latitude, and must necessarily be much hinged on probabilities and contingencies; since misfortunes, difficulties, and accidents are often unavoidable, and the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong,—it is therefore obvious, that the line of our conduct, in this case, is not so easy to be drawn. Some allowance of human infirmity, and of misfortunes, ought to be fairly granted to all administrations; and I must in truth add, more particularly to those of this country, when their measures and endeavours for the public service are thwarted, impeded, and marred, as much as possible by the ingenuity, craft, sense, and sophistry of a violent and able opposition: though at the same time I cannot help saying, that an administration, who, through fear of the clamours of opposition, shrink from necessary vigorous measures, seem to me to shew more attachment to their places, than to the public weal, and not well fitted to hold the reins of government in this country. And I fear the Public has too often

suffered from this impolitic pusillanimity,—which sacrifices the general interest to present private convenience.

So much, Sir, I apprehend, fairly follows from these premises,—that it would be a rash mode of proceeding, to displace every Administration, which has acted erroneously, unskillfully, or unsuccessfully; much more so for the Parliament to interpose its over-ruling judgment on such general grounds;—that it is also next to impossible to determine, from such a very general display of things, how much is imputable to mismanagement, and how much to other causes;—and therefore, the degree of blame and demerit of particular administrations, and of our interference in regard to them, under such general imputations, must depend on a particular enquiry, and all contemporary attendant circumstances.

But, Sir, however well-disposed I am to make fair allowances for the failures of public affairs, I am not at all inclined to split hairs, or weigh equity by grains and scruples, when the fate of a nation is at stake; and therefore I repeat, Sir, again,—would to God there was an appearance of a better and more able administration; more likely to meet with the unanimous concurrence of the  
D nation,

nation, and to draw down blessings and prosperity on its concerns ! I would not even stand upon any previous enquiry, how far the present ministers can be exculpated or not ;—nay, even if they could be exculpated, I still should vote, in the present circumstances, for their giving up their power into abler hands. But where must I look for any such encouraging prospect ? I am bold to concur in the observation of much older and more experienced men than myself,—that there appears a dearth of those signal talents for government, which have characterized some periods. I will hope they are only latent, and that they will appear as occasion calls for them. But taking things on a moderate scale, where is the body of men, that answers to the description abovementioned,—the object of our political desires ?

In looking towards those, who are more or less known to the public, — I see, indeed, a motley group of several gentlemen out of office, whose worth, rank, abilities, and talents, are very respectable ; but no particular apparent superiority in these respects, upon the whole, above the present ministers ; no supereminent, unrivalled political genius. Alas ! no Chatham ! I wish not in the least to detract from the *absolute* merit they possess : I am sure I feel not the least bias so to do :

I only view them now *politically* and *comparatively*, and as far as the Public and the Parliament are acquainted with them. Perhaps they *might* manage the affairs of the nation much better than the present administration have done;—so *might* perhaps others:—but nobody will say that is ground sufficient for parliamentary interference, or for pressing in that manner any Ministers upon the Crown. Let me only ask this one pertinent question;—it deserves peculiar attention in the present argument;—Have the minority the favor, the confidence, the wishes of the Nation? Is the sense and the opinion of the People with their principles and conduct? \*

\* I leave the question to be answered by every one's own feelings and observation. Mine answer, No. I desire not to rest this negative on my own credit, but I vouch the more acceptable opinion and experience of a strong opponent of the present Administration.—He alledges, that our times afford one of the “ few examples, in the history of this country, of unsuccessful Ministers, and an unpopular Opposition.” . . . . “ That, in common with the rest of mankind, it is their ambition to get into power, it were folly to dispute; that they have erred in the means” [viz. obtaining the voice of the people] “ it were blindness not to see.” . . . . “ While the torrent of popular rage was ready, at every moment, to burst out against our Ministers for their ill conduct, the people could repose no confidence in the Minority, WHOSE PRINCIPLES THEY ABHORRED.” *Examination into the Conduct of the Present Administration, from 1774 to 1778; by a Member of Parliament,* p, 5, 6. *Almon.*

I think, Sir, I do discriminate here and there an individual out of office,—who has some pre-eminent title to our political expectations;—to whom the Public in general do look up with rather more distinguished hope, confidence, and good opinion;—by whom, perhaps, both Sovereign and People unite in thinking that the public service might be advantaged. What is the cause then that they are not employed? I would hope no regard to party prevails in this case over the public welfare, to check the invitation, or occasion the refusal. There *may be*, likely enough, more, who deserve the same or greater regard;—but their superior talents are not yet come forth into public view;—they are unknown or untried.

Sir, I think myself now warranted to conclude from these premises,—that this House has not sufficient reason to give its sentiments against the present Administration, previous to a proper enquiry, how far they are, or are not, to blame for the errors and misfortunes laid to their charge. This will be still more strongly evidenced from the sequel. But, if his Majesty chuses to appoint another Administration to morrow, or to day, I have not the least objection in the world. Sir, our Constitution has very wisely allotted different parts to  
the



the different orders of the State ; and it is much to be wished, that we were all particularly circumspect not to break in upon, or counteract, the rules and the spirit of that wise disposition. It is the peculiar department of the Crown to appoint and displace Ministers, according to its own discretionary wisdom : it is ours to petition and remonstrate against, or to impeach, evil ones. The Crown is the proper constitutional judge beforehand, who are the most likely, fit, or properest persons to fill the executive offices of the state : we, on our part, have a constitutional right to judge of, and censure, their conduct in the administration of them. But for the Parliament to interfere in the appointment, or without very sufficient cause, in the removal of Ministers ; or to take part with all the clamors and charges of a discontented minority ; is below its dignity, would lessen its respect, and introduce confusion. It is therefore what no Parliament ever has practised.

That this nation has been involved in a very unpropitious war for these four years past, — that we have expended much blood and treasure in it, without any equivalent, — and that many are the difficulties and evils it has apparently involved us in, — all this I readily grant ; but to the conclusion, that the whole blame of this war, its  
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ill success, and its attendant or consequent evils, must be laid upon the folly, inability, wickedness, and ill conduct of the present Administration, impartial reason bids me to demur.

An Honourable Gentleman used this singular argument to prove it, to wit, that all our Commanders had desired leave to resign their commands, and were come home dissatisfied with the conduct of our Ministers. Sir, I rather think that Gentleman to be mistaken, as to the generality of this assertion; but let it be admitted:—I ask, have these discontented Commanders been successful? No. Has not the nation been dissatisfied with the want of better success? Yes. And has not that dissatisfaction been expressed in casting the blame, according to people's various views of things, either on the Ministers or the Commanders? Certainly. Now, in such a state of things, it is doubtless as natural for a General, in looking about for the causes of his failure, to find something faulty in the plans, directions, orders, or support, under which he has acted, to quit his unfavourable station, and to complain of the Ministers, as it is for those Ministers, in the same state of mind, to seek for the fault in the mismanagement of the General;—both may the more easily find and exaggerate the  
supposed

supposed faults, when they are at such a distance from each other, and in such a situation as ours ; —both with great integrity and sincerity,—only with the bias of a discontented mind, eager to justify itself.

But what can one conclude from these very general premises against either?—Nothing in favor of the one to the prejudice of the other. And I may in truth further add this observation against the argument of the Honourable Gentleman,—that where there has been ill success, or apparent fault somewhere,—there are as many *plausible* objections against the conduct of the Commanders of our forces, as against the directions and superintending power under which they acted. I beg to be rightly understood. I say not that there are any *real valid* ones against either, nor even *plausible* ones in some cases of ill success ; but I appeal to the public sense, whether there is not, upon the face of things, as much occasion to throw reflection on the execution, as upon the direction, of the unsuccessful measures.

Among the striking apparent causes of our failure against the revolted Colonies, stands foremost, in the public consideration, that expedition to Philadelphia, and all its circumstances, which

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an Honourable Gentleman, a late Commissioner to America, has this day brought forward in that view : it may possibly be very justifiable ; but till we are better informed, there certainly seems to lie a most egregious blame in that quarter, from whence that naval expedition to Philadelphia originated. I am sure the nation has a right to an inquiry into these and other great failures ; more particularly, considering the mutual general accusations that have been publicly reciprocated ; and since all parties seem heartily willing to meet it, I hope it will be very soon brought on.

But, Sir, since Gentlemen have chosen to anticipate the proposed enquiry so far, as to go into the supposed general causes of our ill success, it is but fair to attend to that *peculiarity* of circumstances and situation, which have rendered this war the most difficult contest this country ever was engaged in,—the like of which occurs not in our annals, nor in those of any other nation. I shall only briefly hint at some, and enlarge more upon others, according as may most serve to profit.

Armies to be transported to North-America, across an ocean of 3000 miles, together with all kinds of ordnance stores, arms, and ammunition for their use : those armies to be, in general,  
recruited

recruited and supplied, as well with new men, as with every thing else, from Europe. The people that have obliged us to these efforts, are a thriving and improving nation, amounting to at least three millions of souls, descended for the most part from our own stock, and as much assimilated with us, in all respects, as the people in Great Britain are with one another: the same arms, the same art of war, the same language, the same sort of liberal feelings, the same free and determined spirit, the same love of liberty, the same state of improvement in civilized life, and in every thing really useful and valuable, as ourselves;—without our luxurious and dissipated manners. This people, inhabiting the vast continent of North America, to the length of near 3000 miles, as well as to a considerable breadth, where barren waste, or savage nations, bound their territory, are united in a confederated league to support their independence against us; are entire masters of this extensive country, and perfectly well acquainted with it. No province or district with us, no assistance or support there: we have all along possessed only the ground which our army occupied, or could immediately command. Never were European arms carried across the Atlantic on such a disadvantageous footing. Let it further be considered, that it is three weeks or more,

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before

before any intelligence from thence arrives here, and six before answer can be received to it. How peculiarly difficult to lay the plans and direct the operations for reducing by force of arms such a people, in such circumstances, at such a distance, and with such advantages ! I am aware of their disadvantages ; but they are nothing comparatively with the above, when supported by those I am still to enumerate.

For, Sir, besides these general circumstances that uncommonly enhance the difficulties of the present war, I must not omit one peculiar disadvantage attending this contest, in which it is unparalleled both in example and in impropriety. Sir, every general measure respecting North America is supposed to want, and has accordingly had, a Parliamentary sanction. War or peace ; negotiation or no negotiation ; the terms on which we will or will not negotiate ; what we will or will not grant ; what we will or will not do in this contest ;—are made matters of legislation,—points of Parliamentary settlement. Nothing demanded, granted, or relaxed without an express Act of Parliament. A method in war quite foreign and incongruous to our Constitution,—and therefore no wonder it has thriven so ill. Every attentive person, at all conversant in  
public

public affairs, must have observed the inconveniencies and disadvantages to our interests resulting from this unpropitious circumstance, especially in these times of political licentiousness. I will only just hint at the delay from Parliamentary forms, Parliamentary debates, and Parliamentary recess, and at the glaring impropriety of your measures and your terms being known to your enemy, and coming to him ready canvassed, long before you put the former in execution, or propose the latter. What sort of a negotiation, I pray, must that be, when your enemy knows the *ultimatum* you intend to offer before you do offer it?—The only advantage to be derived from it is what we have neglected to use; I mean the saving the trouble and expence of sending out extraordinary Commissioners: for surely when the general terms, on which you will treat, are declared by a public Act of Parliament, which may be communicated by a flag of truce, it appears very absurd to send out a pompous and expensive Commission to settle the detail, till you know whether your general grounds are agreed to. Till then it can do nothing; and if those general grounds are rejected, they can not be enlarged or relaxed without another equally public act of the Legislature. In short, this sort of Parliamentary legislative war is a monster in our Constitution,

and has accordingly led us into monstrous absurdities.

I have not yet done with the *unexampled* circumstances of this war. There remains one more for me to mention ; the last in order, but not the least in fatality. There never was a war waged by us before this, Sir, in which a numerous and able Opposition, favoured, defended, abetted, justified, and encouraged THE ENEMY ;—nay, glory in it, —and that openly in the face of Parliament, of the Nation, and of the whole World. They may perhaps plead conscience for so acting ; I judge not their hearts, or their motives ; let them see to that : I only appeal to the fact as an unparalleled instance of baneful Opposition.

Sir, I speak only of what is public, open, and known to every body,—Parliamentary debates, public prints and documents. Every part of the conduct of those, against whom we are at war, has been justified and extolled both in and out of Parliament, while that of our Government, who represent the Nation, has been condemned, vilified, abused, and imputed to the basest motives. Reasons and abuse (I dispute not the pure intentions of those who uttered them)



but I say,—Reasons and abuse have been plentifully furnished to the adversary from our Parliamentary debates: these, together with fervent wishes, prayers, and endeavours that we might not succeed, lost no efficacy in crossing the Atlantic, or in being accompanied with private correspondence;—and that they have often served to revive the drooping spirits of our adversaries in America, and to give fresh vigour to their efforts, some striking instances upon record can witness. We know also of a public society, which avowed the express intention of supporting the revolted against what it stiled murders committed by the national forces.—I REJOICE, said a very great man in his place in Parliament, I REJOICE THAT AMERICA HAS RESISTED.—Would not this to the Americans be equivalent in efficacy to the sanction of an oracle in the days of yore? Sir, it is known to all the world, that from the time of the Stamp Act, to the present moment, the conduct of the American Colonies has been most efficaciously supported, in the manner abovementioned, by a party in this country.\*

Of

\* “ The Society of the Bill of Rights became the ostensible Patrons of the Colonies. They transmitted sums of money to enable them to carry on their intrigues and opposition; they were exhorted by them to persevere in their  
“ resistance

Of all the difficulties which this Administration, our Generals, our Admirals, and the Nation, have had to struggle with,—this is the most baneful. Of all grievances, this is the heaviest : I wonder it has not sunk us ; other nations stand amazed how we go on at all. If there be a *secret* influence any where else which has contributed to

“ resistance of Acts of the Legislature, which they declared to be NO PARLIAMENT. *Property, say they, is the natural right of mankind. The connection between taxation and representation is its necessary consequence. The connection is now broken, and taxes are to be levied both in England and in America by men who are not their respective representatives.* OUR CAUSE IS ONE ; OUR ENEMIES ARE THE SAME. WE TRUST OUR CONSTANCY AND CONDUCT WILL NOT DIFFER. DEMANDS WHICH ARE MADE WITHOUT AUTHORITY, SHOULD BE HEARD WITHOUT OBEDIENCE.” Among the signers of this truly patriotic epistle, we find, among others, the celebrated names of Glynn and Oliver, Trevannion and Townsend, Mawby and Sawbridge. - - - - - “ But it was not only public societies, private individuals enforced the same doctrines : *Go on, go on, say they, in Letters which filled all the public papers, your friends are daily increasing in England ; persevere, and your RESISTANCE will be crowned with success.* When, in superaddition to those facts, are mentioned public speeches and inflammatory writings, can any mortal hesitate to concur in thinking with us, that the present war with the Colonies was rather ENCOURAGED than PROVOKED ?”—*Answer from the Electors of Bristol to Mr. Burke.*

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our misfortunes,\*—this at least is an *open*, evident, palpable, influential dead weight on our affairs.

Sir, I am very willing to allot to Administration their share of error and misconduct; but it is with true conviction that I concur with the people of this country, in tracing to the above *unparalleled* kind of opposition, a very ample share of all the evils that have been to day and daily so rhetorically displayed, as having flowed from the American war. That active influence will ever stand recorded in our history among the chief causes of the existence, continuance, protraction, and ill success of that unhappy contest. And if we do finally lose those thirteen Colonies,—Sir, it has already been prophetically recorded by the nervous pen of JUNIUS to what quarter the blame may justly be brought home: hear *him*, who is in this case an uncontrovertible judge. “Un-  
“ fortunately for this country (says he) Mr.  
“ Grenville was at any rate to be distressed because  
“ he was minister, and Mr. PITT and Lord CAM-  
“ DEN were to be the patrons of America, be-  
“ cause they were in opposition. Their declara-  
“ tion gave spirit and argument to the Colonies;

\* Mr. HARTLEY's *Letters*, p. 43.

“ and

“ and while, perhaps, they meant no more than  
 “ the ruin of a minister, they IN EFFECT DIVIDED  
 “ ONE HALF OF THE EMPIRE FROM THE OTHER.”\*  
 Posterity, not finding the same excuses, which  
 our personal knowledge of their worth suggests to  
 us, will execrate the memory of those men who,  
 by their ill-timed violent opposition, have cut  
 off thirteen-valuable provinces from the Empire.

Was it not expressly and argumentatively fore-  
 told, Sir, in those incomparable Protests upon  
 record against the repeal of the Stamp Act,—that  
 the conduct of those who repealed it (the same  
 party and class of men who have supported the  
 Colonies to this day†) would inevitably “ bring  
 “ upon us all those evils and inconveniences, to  
 “ the fear of which we now sacrifice the Sove-  
 “ reignty of the Realm, and this at a time when the  
 “ strength of our Colonies, as well as their desire  
 “ of a total Independence on the legislature and  
 “ government of their Mother country may be  
 “ greatly augmented; and when the circum-  
 “ stances and dispositions of the other powers  
 “ of Europe may render the contest far more  
 “ dangerous and formidable to this King-

\* JUNIUS's *Letters*, Vol. I. p. 9.

† See Mr. HARTLEY's *Letters*, p. 54.

dom.”\*—In fact, all this war we are involved in with our Colonies is solely in support of that Declaratory Law, which the abovementioned class of men were the authors of: for the Parliamentary Sovereignty, which it asserts, is the fundamental basis of all other rights of Government, and is therefore what the revolted Colonists have principally revolted from.—It is the ground of our quarrel. The Congress itself explicitly declares it to be the sum total of *all the grievances, of which they complain*.† So that in every respect this is the war of the Opposition; that is, they have brought it on us, they have encouraged its progress, they have used their best endeavours to render us unsuccessful; they, therefore, must answer to their country for all its evil consequences. ‡

Sir, how eagerly was the agreeable circumstance of our last augmentation being so speedily

\* *Lords Protefts*, Vol. II. p. 281. The two Protefts against the repeal of the Stamp Act are well worthy the attention of those, who wish to form a true judgment of things.

† See their *Declaration*.

‡ A very long note intended for this place, relative to some part of Mr. D. HARTLEY's *Letters* on this Subject, I have rather placed by itself at the end of this pamphlet, that the connection of the Speech might not be too much interrupted by the length of those remarks.

raised caught at to day, in order to impute it to an evil occasioned by those, who have supported the constitutional subordination of the Colonies. If we do not get men, it is,—the people will not serve in such a war, or under such an administration: if they come in cheerfully to serve their country, it is,—trade and manufactures fail in this fatal war. Inconsistent and pitiful shifts ! But let the latter position be admitted,—it is plain from the above premises, at whose door the guilt, if any, lies, as well of this, as of all other distresses occasioned by the American war. Thank God, Sir, those distresses are not so great as some people seem inclined to make them. I differ so far as to be certain, if I have any senses, that this Nation is in a very flourishing happy condition, and likely to continue so, if its concerns are managed by wise, honest, and intelligent counsels,—even supposing the perfect emancipation of the thirteen American Colonies. I am confident, Sir, that, under such administration, we should not be a less flourishing, less potent, or less happy people for that loss. By adopting in many respects a more liberal and enlarged policy, with regard to Ireland; to trade, to our own subjects, and to foreigners; by turning our views to cultivate new sources for trade and commerce; by drawing closer such connections as will most favour our

trade and manufactures ; by wife alliances on the continent ; by moderate, prudent, and firm conduct towards other powers ; by a skillful persevering attention to the œconomical management and improvement of the public revenue ; by wise regulations respecting our dependencies abroad ; by unremitted vigilance to maintain our superiority of naval power ;—by such methods as are only pointed to by these imperfect hints, and many more discoverable to persons of greater sagacity, I am persuaded that we might draw forth from the stock, the industry, the knowledge, the skill, and the patriotism of our people, an infinite variety of great resources and advantages, which would continue to render us long a powerful, a wealthy, and a happy Nation.

In the mean time, Sir,—I am very ready to acknowledge the evils of war. It is a pestilence I never think of but with horror. But it is an unavoidable evil, and when we are necessarily engaged in it, the distresses it occasions must be borne with fortitude and patriotism. But this Nation, thank God, has hitherto felt no other than such as are common to all our wars,—if not in sort, at least in quantity ; and I think there is sufficient reason to flatter ourselves, that we are at least as able, under the assistance of Heaven, as

we have ever been for centuries past, to defend ourselves from the perfidious attacks of our enemies, and to ward off the distresses they intend us.—I am not without hopes of doing more.

I cannot, Sir, close this part of my Speech, without begging it may be rightly understood, that by giving to the Opposition their due share of having involved us in this war and its attendant evils, I mean not by any means to deny or cover misconduct in our Ministers, or the share of blame, that from thence must devolve upon them. It is, however, with more perfect evidence and certainty, that we can pronounce a general sentence against the former than against the latter ; because we have heard the defences and apologies of those, while these are in such a delicate situation, that they often can not alledge the reasons of their political conduct, without betraying the charge entrusted to them. I agree, nevertheless, that it is necessary and right for us to judge, in many cases, according to the light before us, and the importance of the subject ;—and also to demand and insist on sufficient information. I will also freely say,—that I see and lament many grievances and evils in the administration of our public concerns,—unfortunately not peculiar to this or that set of Ministers, for then they were easily



easily remedied,—but too common to all, or too deeply rooted in the luxurious dissipation and profusion of the age. At the same time I know of nothing so likely to remedy them, or to procure and secure to us an honest, virtuous, and able administration of Government—as an honest, virtuous, able, and truly patriotic Opposition.

## II.

I am come now, Sir, to the *other* topic alledged to prove the absurdity of trusting the present Ministry with the conduct of affairs, and the necessity of our insisting on their removal. It was,

The presumption, that they would continue part of our forces in the revolted colonies, for the purpose of pursuing the mad and ruinous scheme of reducing them to obedience.

Indeed, the Honourable Gentleman \*, who particularly urged this topic at first, modestly added, he could not presume to dictate *where* our forces might be employed to the most advantage, as that must depend on more particular information than he could pretend to. And this should have prevented his zeal from hurrying him, immediately

\* Mr. Fox.

after,

after, into the imprudence and inconsistency of asserting, that he would sooner refuse his assent to the force now to be voted, than see any part of it employed against the present powers in North America. For, on a little calm reflection, he must allow, with every body else, that it would be the height of political and unconstitutional absurdity, to prescribe limits to the executive power of the Crown in any war, and particularly in such a one as this, in regard to the places where our regular forces *shall* or *shall not* be sent, or kept : this must so much depend on particular circumstances and exigencies, on secret information, and other similar contingencies, that a discretionary power of directing the force of this country, in time of war or rebellion, is wisely vested in the Crown. And therefore we must necessarily trust the management of the executive power with the Administration for the time being, or fall into very great political absurdities. Upon that management the Lords and Commons are the proper check ; and if we find sufficient reasons not to trust them, we must petition and remonstrate against, or impeach them, according to the nature of the case.

But, for God's sake, Sir, let us avoid confusion, and not mistake our constitutional office  
and

and department. We are not the executive power, but a control over the actions of that power : our proper office is not to plan, or direct the future measures or operations of war, but to pass our judgment or censure, if need be, on those that are past. I wish, from my soul, that Parliament had not been so deeply involved in the executive department : the inconveniences resulting from thence, in regard to our transactions with the Colonies, have been touched on above ;—but this is not all the evil. It is, besides, a precedent of a very dangerous nature to the wise order, and rules of our free Constitution. Sir, if further pursued, it has a fatal tendency to annihilate that awful control over ministerial conduct, which results from the dread of a parliamentary enquiry ; the most effectual security for a proper and prudent exertion of executive power. For, if we direct measures, or give them our previous approbation, and they prove evil ones, the odium falls on us ; we lose our respect with the people, they lose their remedy against bad ministers, and the salutary benefits of the division of political power, as allotted by our Constitution, and approved by long experience, are precluded. I am persuaded, if the Honourable Gentleman, who occasioned this reflection, had considered this, he would not have let fall any thing, that has so fatal a tendency to

to encroach on the political order of our government, and the sacred interests of liberty \*.

Having said thus much, in general, on the impropriety of the Parliament's interfering, to direct or limit the employment of our armed force in time of war, I proceed to the question which has been agitated to day,—whether sound policy does, or does not, dictate the withdrawing all  
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\* The following extract, from a pamphlet which I have before quoted, is, in my opinion, fraught with some very pertinent and wise observations. “ It is universally understood, that it is the business of the Minister to conduct the executive part of government, without the intervention of Parliament. Nothing can be more wise, because nothing can be attended with greater safety than this rule : the Minister is answerable for his conduct to the Nation ; the dread of a parliamentary enquiry keeps him in awe ; and it is therefore the business of parliament not to screen him from punishment by a previous approbation of his measures.

“ When a measure is laid before Parliament by the Minister, their opinions, concerning the expediency of it, must, in a great measure, be formed according to his representation of the matter ; because it cannot be supposed, that the members have received sufficient information from any other quarter. The approbation of parliament, therefore, (even without any supposition of undue influence) may be generally expected as a thing of course ; and while it  
“ removes

our force from the revolted Colonies in North America?—Or, what conduct we ought to pursue in regard to them?

My sentiments, with regard to the proper conduct that this country ought to have held towards those Colonies, have varied according to circumstances: the end to be obtained always uniform;—an equitable, just, profitable, and honorable reconciliation; but the means to be pur-

“ removes from the Minister all apprehension of a future  
 “ enquiry, it can afford to the Nation no security with re-  
 “ spect to the propriety of the measures approved of.

“ During the American contest, however, the Minister  
 “ has had address enough to make every measure of ordi-  
 “ nary execution, a measure of legislation. If we had a  
 “ war with France, or any foreign nation, would an appli-  
 “ cation have been made to Parliament to sanctify every  
 “ step that may have been expedient, and while we protected  
 “ the Minister, ruined the cause by delay. Nobody ever  
 “ thought it necessary, that persons should be appointed by  
 “ Parliament, to treat concerning a peace with a foreign  
 “ power; yet the commission to Lord Howe and his brother  
 “ received a parliamentary sanction.” *Examination into the  
 conduct of Administration*, p. 14, 15.

I am perfectly aware of the grounds for this parliamentary interference in regard to the affairs of America;—but they do not lessen the pertinency or importance of the above observations on the subject. Nothing is so dangerous as what tends to bring the legislative body under the entire direction of the executive.

fued, and the terms on which it should take place, must vary, in the eye of sense and political prudence, according to circumstances. And as a brief recital of the progressive variation of my opinion on this matter, will throw some light on that which I now espouse, in concert with some of the ablest heads in this assembly,—I hope a little indulgence of the House for that purpose.

Sir, that it was just, equitable, and agreeable to the principles of all civil government, to employ the force of the empire to maintain the laws,—to coerce the tumults,—to quell the insurrections in North America,—and to reduce the revolted people of those provinces to due constitutional subordination to the established Government,—I always did, and do still believe \*. To have given up all that important connection of the Colonies with this country, which consisted in their subordination to parliamentary legislature,—to have suffered this constitutional bond of our political

\* The grounds and principles, on which that judgment stands, perfectly coincide with those detailed in a publication entitled, *Observations on Dr. PRICE's Theory and Principles of Civil Liberty and Government ; with a Letter on the pretensions of the American Colonies in respect of Right and Equity.* 1776.

union to be effectually dissolved,—to have thereby emancipated those Colonies into the condition of mere members *at will* of the British Empire ; and all this, tamely, and without any struggle,—would have been condemned by ourselves, by all the world, by posterity, as the most supine weakness and folly ; nor would any Nation in Europe have submitted to it.

I waive the unnecessary consideration at present,—how far it was politic to take, originally, the measures, which brought those high matters into contest. I own; I rather incline to think they were so ripened, as to start out of every incident or measure relative to the Colonies. But what I here assert is, that when they were brought into open undisguised controversy,—when the total legislation of parliament, nay even parliamentary interference in their legislation, was denied,—when their submission to the Navigation Act was put upon the footing of mere voluntary concession,—it was high time, alas ! more than time, to maintain the old constitution against those destructive innovations. Would we had never sent penal, irritating Acts of Parliament to America, without force sufficient to maintain their authority and efficacy ! When it came, however, by our impolitic indulgence to the point abovementioned, even

then there was no apparent impracticability in the undertaking : the most deterring circumstance was the encouragement that American resistance received from the fatal zeal of opposition, but which it was hoped the evidence of open revolt would reform into a more enlightened patriotism.

But, Sir, unavoidable as this civil contest became on our side, upon the principles of right and national policy ;—practicable as the reduction of the revolted to their duty and right reason, appeared at first ;—yet difficulties increased upon us considerably, as we proceeded. How far that has been owing to mismanagement, either in Ministers or Commanders, is well worthy of enquiry : certain it is, that we effected nothing in America, but rather strengthened our adversaries ; and that from the increasing union and resolution of all the Colonies against us, concurring with all the unfavourable circumstances already detailed, and the underhand encouraging support of the French Court,—our prospects of success became very precarious. And, at last, the fatal loss of our army under General BURGOTNE seemed to give a deadly blow to them.—I, Sir, was one of those, who thought it was then time to give up the undertaking, that we had made a sufficient and reasonable trial, that the risks of proceeding  
further



further in it, particularly considering the threatening appearances of France, were greater than the benefits of success could any wise counterbalance; and that therefore a method of amicable and beneficial termination should have been immediately adopted.

My friends know, that in consequence of this reasoning, my opinion last winter at this time was, that the most eligible plan for the interests of this country then required, to open a fair and friendly treaty with the Colonies, under the following premises:—that both had honestly maintained our supposed rightful claims;—that we had hitherto failed in reducing them, by force, to that term of constitutional subordination, which we apprehended to agree best with right, and with the interests of both countries;—that they had taken advantage of these circumstances to emancipate themselves entirely from all political connection with this country, and had maintained their independence with bravery and success;—that, after the trial already made, we had very small hopes of prevailing over their resolutions;—that the expence of blood, treasure, and strength, in the further pursuit, would probably be greater than the object, if gained, would be adequate to;—that we sincerely wished their happiness and prosperity,

prosperity, as far as it did not essentially clash with our own;—and therefore were desirous to put an end to the contest, on the most advantageous terms to both parties.

My proposition should then have been a negotiation on the most liberal footing, on the foundation of mutual interest; in order to cement between us as close an union, friendship, and connection, as we should apprehend, on both sides, to be our real reciprocal interest; if not agreeable on the term of political union, as parts of one and the same Empire, then on that of as close a confederacy as we could agree upon. This I looked upon as the only rational and practicable method of treating with that people, in our then mutual circumstances. There was absolutely then no medium, between pursuing their reduction, by force and hostility, or negotiating with them on this open and liberal footing. It was evident to me, that any endeavours of a negotiation on more narrow and confined principles, would only expose us to insult, make the breach still wider, and infinitely hurt our cause. This evidence, Sir, became demonstration, I had almost said, intuition, after the ruling powers in America had gained the open acknowledgment and alliance of the French Court. How any the

least spark of hope could be entertained, after that, of their listening to terms short of independency, is to me inconceivable. I was present at the debate on the subject last spring, within these walls, and it was with no small degree of astonishment, that I heard the sanguine arguments and hopes which an Honourable Gentleman, who spoke so pertinently to day\*, then held out of succeeding under the terms of the late Commission. I then thought them so very weak, and so inconsistent with all public appearances, that I could not help flattering myself they were supported by some secret authentic intelligence of the favourable disposition of the people in America to concur with us in such a mode of reconciliation. But the event, very soon, unpropitiously fulfilled all my real expectations, and verified my judgment; and to impute the failure of the Commission, to any thing else than its own intrinsic weakness and incongruity, relative to the circumstances of that time, is not doing it *merited justice*.

For, Sir, I must freely declare, that I look upon that Commission, take all circumstances together, as one of the absurdest, weakest, worst-managed, and most disgraceful measures this country has ever voluntarily adopted. In the

\* GOVERNOR JOHNSTONE.

first place, — there was a political certainty of its meeting refusal and contempt. Had not the Congress very recently \* repeated their positive Resolution, “ that all proposals for a treaty between Great Britain and the United States of America, inconsistent with the Independence of the said States, or with such treaties and alliances as shall be formed under their authority, should be rejected ? ” Could it be supposed, that the ruling powers of America, after having baffled all our attempts for four years, having asserted Independence in the face of our most formidable force, without any support but from their own people, having successfully maintained it against us for two campaigns, having just ruined and made prisoners a whole army, — would, at the moment when they were acknowledged and strengthened by a great foreign alliance, that can effectually assist them, treat on any such footing, or terms, as those of the Commission, and throw up, at once, all their great hopes, importance, and Independence ? It were a wanton expectation. The Commission, therefore, was not only a waste of time, trouble, and expence, but an humiliation and abasement without any equivalent, or prospect of advantage, nay rather, with a certain prospect of contempt, insult, and disadvantage. In one

\* November 22, 1777.

senſe, we did not give up enough, in another, too much. In ſuch a caſe as this, where Independence is inſiſted on, and in the circumſtances of laſt winter, the half-conceſſions, indeterminate propoſitions, and circumscribed policy of that tranſaction, looked too like a reluctant and forced compliance, to obtain any effect than what it did. Sir, it had, in all its parts and circumſtances, a ſtrange appearance of irresolution, and of halting between two opinions, when there really was no middle path, and when the times required a firm deciſive line of conduct.

In the ſecond place, — never was there time ſo unaccountably loſt, to appearance culpably loſt, than in the circumſtances of this Commiſſion, in regard to which, time was every thing. For, if any hopes were formed of its ſucceeding, the moſt plauſible were certainly to be founded on its propoſitions being offered before the French Alliance, then known to be in agitation, was ſigned and ſealed. But though the intentions of making ſuch conciliatory propoſitions was announced before the Chriſtmas receſs 1777, though it was known that a treaty was then negotiating at Paris, between the Court of France and the American Commiſſioners, the preliminaries of which were delivered to them by Monſieur Gerard on the

16th of December,—yet, not only was the Parliament then adjourned for six weeks, in spite of remonstrances to the contrary, but the conciliatory propositions were not presented to Parliament till the 17th of February, eleven days after the above treaty was signed. Sir,—they might easily have been passed, and gone to America, before the preliminaries had been set on foot. While we were irresolute, undecided, and halting, as Lord CHATHAM said, between two opinions, the French hastened the treaty, and thus barred out, for the present, all possibility of succeeding with a commission of that nature \*. Lastly, I must add, that there are many circumstances in the plan and execution of the Commission, that rather tended to impede, than forward its object. The repealing that one particular Act only, which altered the government of Massachusetts Bay, the suspicious appearance of reserve in the Declaratory Bill, relative to the taxation of the Colonies, the ill-judged clause of granting pardons to the people, and some other similar little methods of proceeding, resulted from very circumscribed principles and views, which should not have marked the preliminary foundations of treaty in the present case. I will not, however, enlarge further, Sir,

\* See Mr. HARTLEY's account of this matter, *Letters* p. 34—38.

on the irretrievable ill policy of this past transaction ; the consequence of which has been, that Great Britain, after having become an humble suppliant at the feet of her Colonies, and after having debased herself beyond all example or precedent, is now farther from the point she aimed at, or indeed from any conciliation with them, than she has been during any period of the war \*.

Surely, Sir, if any terms short of Independence were to be held out to the People in America, after their French alliance, one plain explicit Act of Parliament, setting them clearly forth, and declaratory of our ultimatum, properly communicated, would have been a more manly and better method of proceeding, than this very motley and extraordinary Commission ; and I shall always think, that sending out the extraordinary Commissioners from hence, before we were made acquainted in what manner the general preliminaries proposed by Parliament were received, was a hurtful waste to the Public †. But had either the wise counsels and proposal of an Honourable Gentleman ‡ on the 27th and 28th of May last

\* *Examination of the Conduct of Administration*, p. 21.

† See before, p. 27.

‡ Mr. HARTLEY.

year, or the broad-bottomed plan by me before recommended, been adopted, even in January 1778, I think they could hardly have failed of agreeable success. In proportion as we have advanced from that period, the difficulties of, and impediments to conciliation, have been increasing, till they seem to have raised, for the present, unsurmountable obstacles to that desirable end. And this brings me more closely to the last point I proposed to resume from this day's debate, to wit,—what measures does reason, policy, and prudence, now dictate in regard to America?

Will the same arguments *now* militate for proposing such terms, as I before recommended for the circumstances of this time was twelvemonth? By no means, Sir; they would then most probably have relieved us entirely from the evils of war, have procured us *total peace*, and a valuable friendship and connection with the new powers in America. At least, such were the prospects and grounds that scheme went upon; to those beneficial ends only were our claims on the Colonies meant to be sacrificed. But can we now, by this sacrifice, obtain any such advantageous peace,—a peace of valuable, federal friendship, and mutual support, with the Colonies,—and let me add, an honourable peace with France? Does any Gentle-



man think so,—I shall eagerly listen to his arguments. Consider, Sir, the vast change of circumstances since January 1778. The Congress stood *then* unconnected, and free from all real or implied stipulations with foreign powers; *now* they are, we know not how deeply, involved in them.—Consider the injurious acknowledgment of the Independence of the American States,—our consequent hostilities with the Court of France,—the French treaties with the Congress,—the self-interested union of the present ruling powers on that continent with the French Court,—the absolute refusal of our terms, with the insults accompanying it,—and their positive repeated declarations of the only alternatives they will treat upon. All this has wrought such a change upon the face of things, that an honourable very eloquent Member of this House\*, who argued so incomparably in favour of granting Independence last year, thinks it would not be an adviseable measure *now*. But as he did not give us his reasons, I beg just briefly to hint a few observations on this subject.

The only mode insisted on by the Congress of acknowledging their political Independence is *unconditionally* and *absolutely*. No barter, no traffic

\* Mr. Fox.

on this head; no equivalent nor any compensation to us for sacrificing our claims upon that people. We are required to make a previous positive acknowledgment of their Independence, and *then* they will condescend to enter into negotiation with us:—but even our prospects of that negotiation are unfavourably limited by the declaration, that they will not agree to any thing contrary to the treaties and alliances they may have already formed. God knows of what nature those alliances are. And are we, Sir, thus to relinquish all our claims upon the Colonies, emancipate them by a voluntary act, and set them free to the political and commercial intercourse of all nations,—for *nothing*?—nay, at a *very great risk* to ourselves; because, after having granted them this advantage, it is very possible and probable, in the present circumstances, that the negotiation in detail would break off, and then we should be still left at war with them, having thus only been drawn in to strengthen most powerfully their hands, and those of France, by the above acknowledgment. Every body must see, that it is the present relative situation of the Court of France in regard to the Congress and to this Country, from whence all the difficulties and impediments, in this case, arise: it is that which clogs the business. Independence, Sir, in exchange for an advantageous and honourable peace, is a measure  
that

that would deserve our attention ; but will the grant of it now procure either the *friendship*, or even the *neutrality*, of America ? It may be reasonably doubted, whether the Congress are able or willing to transact any thing with us without the concurrence of France ; and it is more than probable, that their connection is of such a nature, as to damn any peace that would be offered to us at present. It is the interest of the Congress to stick closely by France. Can we then, with any prudence or policy, willfully strengthen the hands of our enemies in this important crisis,—not only without *any equivalent*, but with a very *great probability of loss* ? Can we adopt a measure by which we *gain nothing* and *risk prodigiously* ? Why does not the Congress, if desirous of peace, make some offers in return for what they demand of us ? Or is all concession and overture to come from *our* side only ? I trust in God, Sir, we are not reduced to that condition, but have still the resources to make them send their Commissioners to us. At all events, I think myself perfectly warranted to conclude from these observations,—that the *previous unconditional* acknowledgment of Independence, as required by the Congress, is not by any means, at present, an admissible measure.

To withdraw all our troops from North America, and confine our hostile operations to the  
French,

French,—is the advice and opinion of the same honourable member, who concurs with us in thinking the concession of Independence now unadvisable.\* But I should have imagined his penetration would have observed that the same and still stronger arguments militate against the measure he now proposes,—which is the other alternative offered to us by the Congress. Sir, this would, in effect, be putting them in complete possession of Independence, by leaving them at full liberty to confirm and establish it, to strengthen their own government, completely to subdue all our friends and interests in the Colonies, and thereby totally divest us of the holds we still have there: it would thus be effectually abandoning all possible prospect of ever bringing them to any constitutional conciliation with us. But besides that,—it would, in the present situation of affairs, be a powerful strengthening of the hands of our enemies, by giving both the Congress and France prodigious advantages against us.

I repeat again, Sir,—that if the withdrawing our troops from North America could procure a safe, advantageous, and honourable peace (even with the loss of the thirteen Colonies), I think the

\* Mr. Fox,

measure would deserve the utmost attention ; but to do it at present unconditionally, in the manner proposed, would be giving up the greatest advantages to our enemy that they can desire, without any single benefit to ourselves. The force and power of the Congress would be at liberty to attack any of our remaining possessions in North America ;—in which case the same force we now maintain at New York and Rhode Island would probably be obliged to go to their defence ; and it is infinitely better, in every respect, for us at present to be at war with the Congress in the provinces of New York and Rhode Island, than in the defence of Canada, Nova Scotia, or Florida. By withdrawing our troops from New York and Rhode Island, our enemies would be put in possession of two the most convenient and important stations for our security and advantage in the present circumstances, and which would prove the most detrimental to us in their hands, on the whole North American continent. They are exactly the stations, in which we can most effectually check the American power from doing us mischief, or gain the most essential advantages over it ; which can serve the most advantageously for the occasional support of our friends and interests in the Colonies, for the use and security of our fleets and shipping, for the protection of our com-

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merce, for the annoyance of our enemies, for the assistance of our West-India Islands, and for many particular emergencies that may happen. What we give up, in this case, our enemies would gain. To abandon therefore those Provinces, in the present situation of affairs, without absolute necessity or great equivalent, neither of which yet appears, would, in my humble opinion, be a measure fraught with the worst of consequences. I trust then, Sir, it appears satisfactorily, that we can as little embrace this as the other American alternative.\*

What

\* The measure proposed by Mr. HARTLEY in his *Letters*, p. 87. viz. “to withdraw the British fleets and armies from America with offer of peace, on condition that the eventual treaty of alliance shall be relinquished on the part of France,” seems to me quite chimerical; on the one hand, from the repeated adherence of the Congress to the unconditional alternatives already considered, and their positive declarations of not entering into any treaty with Great Britain, inconsistent with treaties or alliances formed under their authority; on the other hand, from the utter improbability that France will relinquish this treaty of alliance, or that the Congress would willfully abandon it for any offers we can make them, much less upon such a vague one as Mr. HARTLEY describes.

There is another sort of a plan ingeniously proposed and set off in the *Examin. into the Conduct of the present Administration*, p. 40. to the end; but though it contains many just and  
true

What then?—it will perhaps be said,—would you advise an offensive war against the Congress, and while you are wasting all your strength to no purpose there, let the French destroy us? No, Sir; the hostilities with America should be carried on just as prudence, opportunity, and the circumstances of the war may suggest and permit. I look upon merely checking the Congress (agreeable to the grounds already stated) from doing us worse mischief, and from affording France more effectual assistance, to be of very great consequence, besides the considerable advantage we derive from the possession of New York and Rhode Island. To measure our power by its extent in former wars, and by our present military establishment, it should appear that we are very able to maintain an army of 20 or 25 thousand men in America; nay, it is pretty certain that, at all events, we shall be obliged to do it somewhere on that continent, or give up the defence

true observations well deserving of attention, yet like the former it is destitute of all foundation in the present circumstances, and in some of its parts refuted, I presume, by what has been said above on the subject. There is certainly *now* no ground for offering terms short of Independence, or even for obtaining any valuable returns for that concession. What difference a successful campaign or two may make, is best left to future consideration;—the first object is to compass them.

of our remaining North American possessions. Therefore, since we must and may have such a force there, surely we ought to dispose it where it can prove the most serviceable to us. I am not for maintaining an army there at the risk of losing what is more essential; but that does not appear; while the vast importance of New York and Rhode Island, and the utility of an active force, at least in one of those Provinces, is very evident from what has been stated above. They are possessions that may even be very useful in a future negotiation of peace.\*

The upshot of all this argument is,—that the injurious conduct of France has rendered the continuance of war unavoidable, and the two American alternatives entirely inadmissible;—and that the most eligible measure to be pursued, in the present circumstances, with regard to the thirteen Provinces in America, is to keep up an active force in New York and Rhode Island to secure the possession of them, and to act as opportunity and emergencies may permit. Indeed this

\* I desire it may be remarked, that I have not even mentioned the presumed increasing disposition in the Colonies of returning to our Government, nor the present internal divisions,—which would add much weight to my argument,—and are indeed the only means, whereby we can recover any part of those provinces.



seems to me the only reasonable plan agreeable to the grounds already stated.

Peace we can not now have on acceptable terms ; therefore we must comply with the necessity of affairs, and prepare for war. The object of it is no longer the recovery of America to constitutional subordination,—but it is self-defence, and as much general advantage to the interests of this country as the fortune of war may favour us with. If we prove successful in the prosecution of it, we may attain to some compensation for the loss of our American Colonies, or perhaps recover much of our interests there ; the effects and revolutions of war are far beyond human foresight. If we do not succeed, and no power, wealth, or wisdom, can ensure success, even that likewise we must bear with fortitude. All war is great risk ; but a nation, like an individual, as human affairs are circumstanced, must stand some risks for honour, dignity, safety, power, and wealth.

What remains then for us to do, Sir, in this important crisis, but to proceed with wise and vigorous counsels, with spirited exertions, and with united efforts and firmness, in the defence and support of the interests of this our dear country ? The enemy is great ; but we have more than once

matched the united power of France and Spain, and, during one of those wars, supported very extended military operations in Germany and Portugal, as well as in America. Sir, we have defeated that united power; and I trust and believe we are still equal, under Providence, with government, and unanimity, to the same efforts and similar success. To that trial we are, however, not now called,—Spain is yet in amity with us. I think we may therefore look upon ourselves, at least, as equal to the present emergency, and able, if dire necessity oblige us, to meet a more trying one.

Having thus, Sir, faithfully, freely, and dutifully, submitted my sentiments on these topics to the sense and judgment of the House, as I solemnly declare without meaning to give, and I trust without having given, any reasonable offence to any person, but solely with a view to aid the interests of Truth, Justice, and the public Welfare,—I now finish with that inward glow of pure satisfaction, which is the immediate consequence of having performed a conscious duty.

REFLECTIONS on some Part of Mr. HARTLEY's *Letters*, being the NOTE referred to in the foregoing SPEECH p. 33, and which properly belongs to that Place.

I Beg leave here to superadd, in plenary confirmation of what I have above advanced, the powerful testimony of Mr. D. HARTLEY himself, member for Hull, on whose good information and word we may safely rely ; who has given it under his hand,—that *he does verily believe and admit, THAT A PARTY IN THIS COUNTRY HAVE ENCOURAGED THE AMERICANS.* See his *Letters* lately published, p. 59. This is another record of truth brought home to the party by one of themselves. He gives it indeed as his sentiment, that this *encouragement was not criminal*: let him and his country see to that;—I only use his uncontrovertible evidence to find the *fact*; I judge not of its *criminality*. All I infer is this plain truth, that their conduct is one of the chief causes of the American war and its evil consequences. And I beg my reader to attend me a few minutes, while I take the pains briefly to consider the evasions Mr. Hartley makes use of to shield himself and his party from this fair imputation. In no part of his *Letters* does his argumentation appear so embarrassed and weak as where he undertakes that point, inasmuch that he frequently contradicts himself; and in one place asserts in direct words the very reverse of the above plain testimony, when he maintains,—that his party “ have *not encouraged* the American resistance to any of the just claims of this country\*.” Now

\* *Letters*, p. 54. I beg leave it may be observed, once for all, that Mr. H. includes in *his party* “ all the opposers of the measures of “ Government, with regard to America, without any distinction of “ any different points upon which they may have severally grounded “ their respective oppositions.”—It is therefore Mr. HARTLEY's fault, and not mine, if the application of my reflections extends farther than it ought.

nothing can save this palpable contradiction, but his laying a peculiar stress here on the word *just*, and thereby putting the issue in this place on the *justice* of our claims ;—an evasion, which would be inconsistent with the ground he himself has taken in the argument, and nothing to the purpose against our accusation.

What I and what the Nation lay to the charge of Mr. H. and his party is,—*that they have incited, encouraged, and been instrumental to the success of the American resistance to the claims and coercive measures of this country.* This is the point I have been arguing : upon this ground I meet Mr. HARTLEY's *third Letter.*

It is in the stile of true controversial management, that instead of taking up the above plain specific charge in a fair manner, he involves it in a multitude of supposed accusations, which we do *not* prefer, in only one division of which it is scarce discernible, and is so mixed up with the rest as to make but one medley compound, which is then dispatched all together with much parade, prolixity, and triumph †. The plain way for me to go to work is to consider, whether what Mr. H. alleges be anywise sufficient to obviate the above clear and determinate charge ?—and notwithstanding the smothering method made use of, we shall find more than one opportunity of striking it clearly home.

His first defence is to shew,—“ that his party did not *originally suggest* to the Americans the first principles of their “ resistance ;” on which he spends four full pages in Quarto with pompous documents.\* I answer, This is not the charge. The charge is, that after those principles were broached in America, they were taken up by that party, abetted, defended,

† P. 54—60.

\* P. 54—58.

justified,

justified, amplified, adorned, supported, and wished success to, by that set of men; and that in this method Mr. HARTLEY and his party were the inciters and encouragers of American resistance; which probably without such support never would have proceeded the lengths it did. He himself however takes, purposely, care to let us understand he thinks there would have been no manner of apology necessary, even if those principles of resistance had been originally suggested from hence\*.

We arrive now at that part of his defence, where he avows verily to *believe* and *admit* “ that a party in this country have “ *encouraged* the Americans.” But, says he,—“ what encouragement did those persons give to the Americans?” His answer is,—“ They encouraged them to persist by petitions, addresses, and remonstrances, to state their grievances and claims of rights, and to pray for redress†.”—Very smooth and charming indeed! Had it been said, they *intended* no other encouragement than that, I could not have contradicted it. But we have sufficient evidence to affirm, that whatever were the *intentions* of Opposition, their *conduct* tended to operate and did operate much more. I appeal to the true representation of facts already stated, and will now corroborate it against Mr. Hartley’s evasion by his own sentiments, words, and expressions, in regard to which he authorises us to look upon him as the representative of the party, which he with so much willing zeal espouses:

He positively asserts,—that we *have broken the civil compact with the American Colonies, and that their Resistance and Declaration of Independence are perfectly justifiable*; which he urges with so much virulence of abuse against Government, in such

\* P. 58.

† P. 59.

a manner, and with such expressions, as are most calculated to inflame the minds of the people with zeal for the Colonies, and with indignation and violence against our cause, our forces, our exertions, and our government; p. 19, 61, 73, and many other places.—He declares he *would have resisted*, if it had been his case, and that *every man with a British heart would have done the same*; p. 63, 72.—He represents the Administration as the *common enemy of both Great Britain and America*, and as *aiming at the heart of the British Constitution, and the deepest roots of our domestic safety*; p. 70, 74.—He declares *the cause of America to be the cause of the British nation, and the war a mere Ministerial war*; p. 71.—He not only concurs in rejoicing with the illustrious CHATHAM, *that the Americans have resisted*, but actually *rejoices that their resistance has defeated the designs of our Ministers*; p. 73. Nobody therefore has more heartily wished success to that resistance than Mr. D. HARTLEY, who looks upon it as just, right, and beneficial for the public weal against the *common enemy* of both countries.

Now all this being transferred by Mr. HARTLEY's authority to his party,—I leave it without any comment to every one's common sense to judge, whether its natural operation is nothing more,—than simply *to make the Americans employ their time in drawing petitions, and waiting for a hearing?* p. 59.—Mr. H. will not, I think, ask again,—“ who aided, abetted, “ comforted or encouraged America, when the die was fatally “ decided for war? ” His desire that it should be *proved* has been accomplished.

His argument to prove, that the American Declaration of Independence was not encouraged from hence,—*because they could not think it their personal interest so to do, and because it defeated every possible means of making an instrument of America to*

*rise into power in this country,\**—is mere speculation opposed to *evident fact*; besides that the speculation is false; for the declaration of Independence might serve personal interest by affording a new strong topic against Administration, and thus America still remain a means of rising into power in this country. So much for Mr. HARTLEY's *proof absolute*.

His string of questions, p. 60, implying, that the particular failures and ill successes there mentioned are not chargeable on the Minority in Parliament,—is too much beside the purpose to take any notice of.

Having now gone through Mr. HARTLEY's defence of himself and party against the charge above exhibited,—I am persuaded their country must find them guilty of the *fact*. And can she then subscribe to his assertion, that they have been *her REAL and DISCREET friends?*† They seem rather responsible for a heavy account. And it should seem also, that they, as far as Mr. H. is a faithful representative of them, “under this charge of responsibility to their country, and of private character in their own minds, are seeking about to exonerate themselves of that responsibility, by imputing the fatal disgraces and destruction, which have been the consequences of their own headstrong conduct,”‡ to the administration of affairs in regard to America, and the majority of the nation who supported it. In this Gentleman's candid stile I should likewise add,—“that this *can* only have been suggested by them as an engine of party to mislead the public.”|| But I disdain to have recourse to such wanton and inflammatory insinuations, or to follow him in imputing the political conduct which I censure to intentional wickedness and villainy. No; I rather apprehend with JUNIUS§, that many of them have all

\* P. 60. † P. 60. ‡ P. 53. || P. 60. § See *Speech*, p. 31.

along “*meant* nothing more than the ruin of a Minister,” and that many have acted from still purer principles. I recommend to him that apothegm of Wisdom itself,—*Judge not, that ye be not judged*; and if he had throughout his Letters fairly rested the principles and conduct of other people, as he does his own, on sincere conviction and honest intentions, agreeable to the amiable specimen, p. 63,—his arguments would have been pursued with more advantage, his Letters would have been much more respectable, and some important observations which they contain, would have been more taken notice of. As it is, the violent *partiality* and *abuse* which abounds in them are a dead weight on their usefulness.

Mr. H. endeavours to defend the repealers of the Stamp Act from being at all accessory to the present unhappy contest with America; but it is in part by putting that charge on a false ground. For nobody says,—“that they have *defeated* all the “operations of the present war\*.” But we refer him to the very respectable and excellent Protests of the Lords who opposed that repeal, and to the conduct of the Colonies ever since, as foretold in those very Protests. The success, which American resistance then had, was held out to the Colonists as an encouragement on every new occasion. From the denial of *internal taxation* they gradually proceeded to the denial of *any regulation of trade, whence any incidental revenue might arise*, then to the refusing Parliament *all right to legislation*, and so ultimately to *perfect Independence*. They continued rising in their demands, in proportion as we gave way to their resistance; and so we arrived at the terrible dilemma—of either relinquishing the *Declaratory Law* of Mr. HARTLEY’s own party, or of effectually supporting by force the authority of law and the old Constitution. This is notoriously the true state of the case.—Yes, but

\* P. 64.



he adds,—“ the Ministry of 1770 gave way likewise to American resistance \* ; ”—it may be ; that won’t exculpate the repealers of the Stamp Act.

Since Mr. HARTLEY’s Letters are now before me, I beg leave to subjoin a few brief observations on one or two articles more.—He is ever representing this American war, as a war merely for the *tea act*, for *unconditional submission*, for *unrepresented taxation*, for an *independent crown revenue at the disposition of a royal sign manual*, and for other much worse purposes, and not for *any one national object* †.—Whatever particular secret views individuals in Administration may have, we can no more fathom than those of individuals in Opposition ; this discovery would probably sometimes not turn out very advantageously to the persons concerned : but to judge of the open evident grounds of this contest, those on which the Government and the Nation have supported it, from public facts, proceedings, and documents, it was for the great national object of the constitutional subordination of the Colonies to the sovereignty of Parliament, against their extraordinary claims of *exclusive legislation and taxation*, and of *mere voluntary submission* to regulations of their commerce. Nay, this is Mr. HARTLEY’s own true account of the matter from the Resolutions of the Congress in 1774 ; see p. 74, 75.

It has been often repeatedly thrown in our teeth,—that we did not embrace betimes the reasonable proposition made by the Opposition and the Congress, to let the Colonies be upon the same footing, in respect to constitutional connection with this country, as in 1763 †.—To which I reply, it was a very nugatory insidious proposition ; because the whole dispute just turned on the question,—*what that footing was ?* So that we

\* P. 65.

† *Passim*.

‡ P. 3, 10, 72, and other places.

came not a step nearer together by agreeing to refer matters to that term. We would willingly have referred the dispute to the *sentiments* of 1763 ;—for it is demonstrable, that a total exclusion of Parliament from all legislation and taxation in the Colonies, and the doctrine of their mere voluntary concession of submitting to our commercial regulations, are flagrant innovations of the old Constitution broached since that time,—the birth and progress of which we can distinctly trace.

Mr. HARTLEY's representations derive a very great degree of speciousness from the failure of the measures adopted by Government, and opposed by him and his party ; but it is not just to try them by that test. The fair way of arguing is to consider what at the time of determination was the most probable and reasonable method of proceeding ; for in the course of time, things may take such a turn as to render it much better to have originally adopted another method. Nations must chuse and act upon probabilities,—and those who take the contrary part, have a great advantage in point of argument, if the measures of Government do not succeed.

I now take my leave of Mr. HARTLEY's *Letters* : they only came in my way as an elaborate endeavour to exonerate himself and his party from being accessory to the existence, ill success, and bad consequences of the American war, by throwing the blame entirely on his fellow-citizens. It has however recoiled upon himself ;

*nec lex est justior ulla  
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.*

For the rest, they certainly contain some very just and pertinent observations, but they are buried, as it were, in declamatory abuse against Administration.

Can

Can I finish better than with holding up, at this critical time, to public view and imitation, the noble and truly patriotic conduct of the great Mr. PITT in 1761, so very different from that which we have now been lamenting? They form a perfect contrast. I mean that which he held after his resignation in that year. Take it in the words of a Minority publication: “ Notwithstanding the unprovoked  
 “ treatment, which Mr. PITT had met with from the  
 “ Favourite and his instruments, yet he did not enter into a  
 “ factious opposition, but behaved with that serenity and  
 “ dignity which was so worthy of his character, and of his  
 “ sincere desire to promote the real welfare of his country.  
 “ So far from opposing Government, or deserting the Public,  
 “ at this very critical juncture, he poured forth his manly  
 “ eloquence, to strengthen the hands, and to give resolution  
 “ and spirit to a feeble and irresolute Administration. His  
 “ zeal for the Public, his firmness, spirit, and moderation  
 “ were no less admired, than the solid wisdom, deep policy,  
 “ and heroic magnanimity of his counsels. When a supply  
 “ of one million was desired, to assist the king of Portugal,  
 “ Mr. PITT behaved, not like a discontented opponent, determined to oppose implicitly, but on this occasion nobly  
 “ supported the cause of his country, and its ally the King  
 “ of Portugal.—He even extinguished the sparks of  
 “ opposition; —recommended union and harmony to  
 “ the ministry, and declared against altercation, which he  
 “ said was no way to carry on the public business, and urged  
 “ the necessity of prosecuting the war with vigour, as the  
 “ only way to obtain an honourable, solid, and lasting  
 “ peace \*.” Does any body blush? —Let him go and do likewise.

\* *History of the late Minority*, printed in 1766, Ch. IV.









